

the results of the investigations of the London Board of Agency. I think that if they discover anything that is not in favour of the industry they will have no trouble whatever in making the people at Home interested in line with themselves. I do not think there will ever come an absolute clash between the Tooley Street merchants and this Board.

42. Would it be out of the way to say that it would take two or three years of investigation by the Board before it will properly function?—I do not think it will take two or three years. I do think that, so far as the local agents in New Zealand are concerned, they will probably be eliminated almost at once—not this season, but within twelve months.

43. You do not think it is false analogy for us to assume that, seeing the good work that the Meat Control Board has already done, the proposed Dairy Control Board would do the same?—I quite agree that if the Meat Board has achieved anything like what I believe it has achieved, a Board of the description we now propose will attain similar results.

44. It is possible?—Yes.

45. More than that, it is probable?—It is probable.

46. *Mr. Field.*] It has been suggested that it would be a fair guide to this Committee and to Parliament if we obtained from the whole of the suppliers of both the proprietary and co-operative factories throughout New Zealand a rough-and-ready vote as to whether they approve the Bill or not. Do you think it would be a fair test or a fair guide?—It may be, but I think you have a sufficiently fair guide here—Mr. Brash can give the actual figures, and they have been published by the Press. The conference at Hamilton was representative of the south Auckland district and the Waikato, and 95½ per cent. of the representatives voted for the Bill, and only 4½ per cent. against it. If the House is going to discuss the matter on that basis it has all the information it requires. If you are going to discuss on the basis of treating the man who runs two cows on the same footing as the man on a large scale—well, anything might happen. Any number of men supplying my factory milk two or three cows for the sake of getting cheap butter. I have not met a big supplier in my district who was not in favour of the Bill.

47. You think that whether a plebiscite was a good thing or not, it would mean an unjustifiable delay?—Yes, more particularly as the Board's constitution is of such a nature that it can be voted out of existence. I think that if as the result of the first election three men antagonistic to the scheme were elected, as is possible, the Board would probably vote itself out of existence.

48. *The Chairman.*] You think that if the Board is fit to control the shipping and large matters of that kind, or to bargain with the shipping companies, the same Board should be able to apply the compulsory clauses of the Bill, or apply them in whole or in part, as the Bill says?—I certainly think so.

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FRIDAY, 27TH JULY, 1923.

HENRY FORSYTH examined. (No. 17.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Will you kindly state your position?—I am a member of the National Dairy Association, and on the executive of the Control Council. With regard to the questions before the Committee, I maintain that there is very much room for an improvement in the methods of handling and marketing our produce both in the Dominion and at Home. Not until we have some form of control will a better state of things be brought about. The proposals in the Bill mean both better handling and better marketing. Therefore under it the producer has everything to gain and nothing to lose. When we have heavy arrivals of New Zealand produce at Home there is usually a big margin between the New Zealand and the Danish prices, and from my own observations I am satisfied that the consumer in England is not getting the full benefit. The present system gives room for speculation, and our goods are often sold under the names of better-selling brands. As far as the Council is concerned, we are not out to exploit in any way the consumer at the other end. We are simply out to get fair value for our goods, to eliminate speculation, and to reduce costs between the producer and the consumer, and get the best price within reason for our goods. The handling of our produce at Home is very clumsy, and any extra cost or deterioration is our funeral. The charges and costs come back on the factories here. I dealt with those points pretty fully when giving evidence before the Committee of last year, and therefore will not take up time with them now. Our present shipping service we do not regard as satisfactory. We have irregular despatches of ships from New Zealand, and more irregular deliveries at the other end, and that is detrimental to the prices. If the market is glutted it gives room for speculation, and that is one thing we want to avoid if we can. We want a better shipping service, and we need a small proportion of cold storage at Home, so that we shall be able to store our goods and feed and stabilize the market. Then, before we can make a binding contract with any shipping company we must have some form of control. Any contract now made by the National Dairy Association cannot be binding upon the dairy companies. Any dairy company, or any combination of the large companies, is at liberty to break away if it thought fit, so that before we can get a binding contract we must have control. A good deal has been said by the opponents of the Bill at various meetings about the farmers marketing their own products. At none of the meetings I have attended have I heard any suggestion from the promoters of the Bill that we were going to market our own produce, or to disturb the present channels of marketing. The intention is rather to supervise the handling and marketing systems. At the present time we absolutely lose control of our produce as soon as it is put on the water. Let me state some of the principal benefits I look for in the establishment of a system of control. In the first place we should get a very much better shipping service, and be able to make better arrangements as to insurance. We should have one body to regulate the quantities of white or of coloured cheese to be manufactured, and also the quantities of salted or unsalted butter to be produced. We want also to be able to advertise